

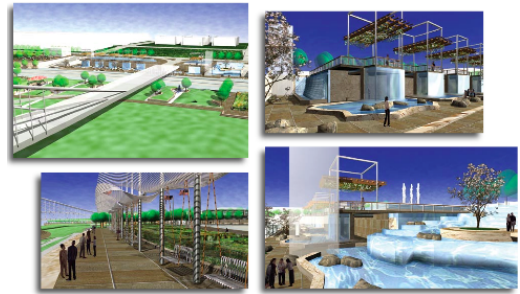


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Cincinnati Riverfront Park *Return to Our River Heritage!*



REFINED DESIGNS FOR CINCINNATI RIVERFRONT PARK REFLECT YEARS OF PUBLIC INPUT

City's new front yard will celebrate Cincinnati's river history and heritage

CINCINNATI, OH:---Over 50 attendees at last evening's Open House/Public Meeting hosted by the Cincinnati Park Board on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, were among the first to view refined plans for the proposed new Cincinnati Riverfront Park. The new designs that were unveiled reflect the input gleaned from an extensive community participation process initiated by Cincinnati Parks in 1998. The park is planned for the downtown Cincinnati riverfront area between Paul Brown Stadium and the Great American Ballpark. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been authorized by Congress to design the park and is mandated to hold public meetings on projects such as Cincinnati Riverfront Park.

"This park was born out of a dialogue with the people of this city," said Alistair McIntosh, Principal and Landscape Architect with Sasaki Associates of Watertown, Massachusetts—the park's designers. "We know from speaking with the citizens of this community that the essence of life here is rooted in the river and the need to connect once again with the water's edge. The design renderings clearly illustrate how the barriers that have prevented people from touching the water and interacting with the river will be removed at last."

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“The park is designed to provide a spectacular showcase for the Roebling Suspension Bridge—a towering icon of the colorful history that defines the city,” noted Varoujan Hagopian, Sasaki Associates Principal and Civil/Waterfront Engineer. “The park possesses many different personalities, with activity options as diverse as people’s interests.”

Among the features unveiled in the refined plans are spectacular water features of pools, cascades, waterfalls and water jets. Also included are a carousel, playgrounds, and two play slides that run continuously along one of the park’s long slopes. Archaeologically significant structures will be unearthed, and are expected to reveal remnants of the early settlement and river commerce in Cincinnati. Then, after being carefully exposed, the area will be preserved to become part of Cincinnati’s “living history”—a park feature to be explored and celebrated. Additionally, portions of the park’s design and features are meant to invoke a sense of the produce industry that once flourished along the river banks.

“Tree groves will be shady areas to read, play or picnic,” said McIntosh. “The great lawns can be used for free play by a single child or as places for a grand concert or large civic events. Giant family-size porch swings will be shaded by an undulating trellis structure which will gently sway with the movement of the swings. The curving trellis also echoes the flow of water. The swings will provide front row seats to the ever-changing sights and luminous energy of the Ohio River and may become one of the most popular of the park’s many features.”

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"You have identified a large number of wonderful ideas and project components that should bring people and excitement to downtown Cincinnati," said one attendee at the Public Meeting. "Now the pressure is on to succeed with the implementation!"

"Fantastic!" said another. "My favorite areas will be the swings and the long slides."

One attendee commented that she was overwhelmed by the design and that she has "...a lot of confidence in the Park Board, that they'll do something of a very high level." Yet another attendee observed that plans were very ambitious and that the plans showed "...a great deal of thought. Anyone who lives downtown is eager to have this, and they've got a fine plan."

"This park will call visitors back to it again and again," noted Hagopian. "The quality of light changes from early morning to late in the evening and provides contrasting daily experiences. Plant materials change seasonally as natural processes are engaged. Opportunities for structured as well as unstructured play exist. The park can accommodate all moods and lead ultimately to enjoyment, consolation or activity."

"After the input we received last night from the public, the Park is now under final design by Sasaki Associates," said Willie F. Carden, Jr., Director of Cincinnati Parks. "The Park is poised to move ahead right now. If Federal construction authorization and first phase funding is achieved by late 2006 as now expected, construction could begin as soon as the third quarter of 2007 and the first phase of the park could be done by late 2009. Given the cost and complexity of the project and the Federal funding and construction process involved, this is an extremely fast timeline for this kind of project."

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A broad-based community process resulted in the 1999 Master Plan being approved by the City, Planning Commission, Park Board and the Urban Design Review Board. The park plan was also later incorporated into the plan for The Banks and into the Central Riverfront Master Plan which was approved by both the City and the County.

“This park has the capacity to reinvigorate this city,” said Hagopian. “In Charleston, South Carolina, we designed and built a waterfront park that transformed an overgrown, abandoned part of the city into the community’s new gateway. City leaders acknowledge that the park has been a powerful engine for the region’s tremendous economic growth and new reputation as a ‘destination city’.”

Though the plans are now entering the final design phase, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to accept comments on the park for the next several weeks. Comments received at the Public Meeting (via written comment cards or from the discussion at the meeting) along with comments relayed to Parks by media from viewers/readers will be carefully considered. **Comments can be e-mailed to Steve Schuckman, Cincinnati Parks Superintendent of Planning and Design, at Steven.Schuckman@cincinnati-oh.gov.**

For more information, please contact Joyce Kamen, Parks Public Relations, at 513.543.8109; or Julie Horne, Parks Chief Business Officer at 513.357.2606.

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*The City of Cincinnati’s parks system contains more than 100 parks and greenspaces located throughout the City’s neighborhoods on more than 5,000 acres.
Cincinnati Parks has been judged one of the best in the nation, rated ‘excellent’
by the Trust for Public Land.*